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Green Porno

Live on Stage

Conceived and performed by
Isabella Rossellini

Written by Isabella Rossellini and
Jean-Claude Carrière

Staged by Muriel Mayette-Holtz

BAM Fisher (Fishman Space)

Jan 16—18, 21—25 at 7:30pm

Jan 18 & 25 at 2pm; Jan 19 at 3pm

Approximate running time: one hour & 15 minutes, no intermission

English translation by **Sofia Groopman**

Hamster costume **Jean Hugue de Chantillon**

Art direction, films **Andy Byers** and **Rick Gilbert**

Production—Les Visiteurs du Soir

Printemps des Comédiens 2013

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I have always loved animals. I am particularly fascinated by the diversity in nature. My family knows this well. Since I was a little girl I brought home all kinds of stray cats and dogs, but also worms, frogs, insects, and read a great deal of books about animals and took many biology courses at the university.

Since my work has been first as a fashion model, then as an actress, this interest of mine remained unknown to the public. But when my career evolved to include writing and directing films, biology became my main source of inspiration.

Encouraged by actor-filmmaker Robert Redford, who is tremendously supportive of experimental, independent films and also very interested in nature, I made short comical films about animals: *Green Porno* is about animal reproduction, *Seduce Me* about different courtship strategies, and *Mammas* about different ways animals are mothers.

“This is what we artists do,” commented Redford about my films. “We tell serious things in the most accessible, entertaining way.”

The great Jean-Claude Carrière, who wrote the theatrical comical version about my interest in nature, said about the wonderment of nature, “How can we ever be bored? Indeed, biology is the greatest show on Earth.”

—*Isabella Rossellini*

Who invented sex?

Why and how?

Isabella Rossellini and I try to answer those questions by observing the natural world, from pachyderms to bugs.

How surprising! How bizarre! Males eaten right after reproduction, one's sperm blown away by another male's within the female vagina itself, wild orgies, fierce fights, dances, seductions, extravagances, unexplainable acrobatics, deadly enigmas, perversions, pregnant males, newborns eaten alive... It's as if nature has willingly multiplied the tracks to create confusion. As if life, to allow reproduction, would play a dangerous and chaotic game, the rules of which are settled by we don't know who and differ depending on the species.

Eggs, abandoned, drift away in the river, ready to meet sperm. Salmon mate in the river where they were born, just before dislocation and death. A termite queen engenders workers as well as warriors, according to the needs of her group. Snails, being hermaphrodites, tease themselves with a stinger before the act. The female aquatic worm isolates herself in a shell with 10 holes, with just one hole the correct one. The male must spread his sperm into each hole and eventually dies exhausted, his task fulfilled.

Life is passed down whatever the cost, offering an intriguing and frightening show that leads to unavoidable questions: What about us? Where do we stand?

The discussion about mating in the natural world includes several two-minute films directed by Rossellini in which she plays a fly, a duck, a squid, or a bug, augmented by live commentary. Other animals featured in the shorts: the snail, the worm, the fly, the shrimp, the deadly spider, the praying mantis, the anchovy, and the bi-phallic snake.

—*Jean-Claude Carrière*





A great actress with a crazy project—staging the sexuality of animals.

With Isabella Rossellini's previous experience of directing 10 shorts on the subject, she now presents it live onstage. Supported by the words of Jean-Claude Carrière, all she was missing was a critical eye at rehearsals. When we met, I instantly said yes. She is majestic, delicious, "crazy," and I immediately felt that we were going to have some real fun!

I discovered she has a strong personality and accurate knowledge, but she is also a singular, complete artist with a creative madness that allows her to propose anything without exaggeration.

She has the sincerity of a child and a dreamer's vision; she is extremely organized to battle the unpredictable nature of feelings. And the more her body constrains her, the more the actress spreads her wings in order to disobey. The magic results from her costumes and from her mysterious beauty, always embellished with joyful laughter! And her unique music comes from her "accents"—her silences, and from playfully switching from one language to another.

When we talked about the diversity of animal sexualities, I discovered how overwhelming the subject is—how amazing, how much it deals with the world and with its diversity, and how sophisticated the facts are. It became essential to share with the audience the density of the project. Isabella proposed images, puppets, costumes, and mime... And then came a sudden burst of laughter when she tried to mime the effort endured by a worm to reproduce.

I attempt to show the extraordinary world of love that surrounds us, the beauty of the animal kingdom, and the immense variety of the loving approaches.

Perhaps it will lead us to think for awhile about ours!

—*Muriel Mayette-Holtz*



Isabella Rossellini. Photo: André Rau

ISABELLA ROSSELLINI

Isabella Rossellini has had a long career as a model, lasting 25 years, 14 of those as the face of the Lancôme cosmetic company.

As an actress, she is best known for films such as *Blue Velvet* and *Sailor and Lula*, directed by David Lynch. She also worked with directors such as Robert Zemeckis in *Death Becomes Her*, Peter Weir in *Fearless*, John Schlesinger in *The Innocent*, and Stanley Tucci and Campbell Scott in *Big Night*. Rossellini was recently seen in the romantic comedy *Late Bloomers* by Julie Gavras also starring William Hurt, *Keyhole* by Guy Maddin, *Chicken with Plums* by Marjane Satrapi, *The Solitude of Prime Numbers* by Saverio Costanzo, and *Du Vent dans mes Mollets* by Corine Tardieu.

With her movie *My Dad is 100 Years Old*, a tribute to her father, Rossellini made her screenwriting debut; she co-directed with

Guy Maddin. In 2008, encouraged by actor/director Robert Redford, she began writing and directing a series of short films for Sundance Channel. *Green Porno* is a comical and theatrical approach to teaching mating habits in the natural world. Its huge success led to other series on the subject of animals: *Seduce Me, Mamas*, and a one-hour television special for Discovery Channel, *Animals Distract Me*.

Rossellini is the daughter of the Academy Award-winning Swedish actress Ingrid Bergman (*Casablanca*, *Anastasia*, *Autumn Sonata*) and the groundbreaking iconic Italian film director Roberto Rossellini, who made film history with *Rome*, *Open City*. She was born in Rome and spent her childhood in Rome and Paris. She moved to New York at the age of 19 to study English and attend college, and settled in the city. She holds dual US and Italian citizenships.

JEAN-CLAUDE CARRIÈRE

Jean-Claude Carrière has been exploring all fields of contemporary expression for more than 50 years.

He made his debut in film alongside Jacques Tati and Pierre Étaix, writing screenplays for Luis Buñuel (*Belle de Jour*, *The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie*), Milos Forman (*Taking Off*, *Valmont*), Volker Schlöndorff (*Le Tambour*), Jacques Deray (*La Piscine*, *Borsalino*), Louis Malle (*Viva Maria*, *Milou en mai*), Jean-Paul Rappeneau (*Cyrano de Bergerac*), and Michael Haneke (*The White Ribbon*).

He has written plays for the theater (*L'aide-mémoire*), and worked with director Peter Brook for 34 years, writing *Conference of the Birds* and *The Mahabharata*, among others. He wrote screenplays for a dozen television movies; three won the Sept d'or award, including *La Controverse de Valladolid*.

He has written for opera publications, as well as for musical theater (*Quel que soit le songe*, by Hanna Schygullah) and on several songs, including some sung by Juliette Greco. He is the author of many books, such as *Le Vin bourru*, *Fragilité*, *Dictionnaire amoureux de l'Inde*, and a volume about Mexico. His last book is titled *Désordre*. He is currently at work on numerous projects.



Isabella Rossellini. Photo: Jody Shapiro

MURIEL MAYETTE-HOLTZ

The actress and director Muriel Mayette-Holtz was appointed general administrator of the Comédie-Française in August 2006. A former student of Michel Bouquet, Claude Régy, and Bernard Dort, she was a professor at the National Conservatory of Dramatic Art between 2000 and 2006. Upon entering the Comédie-Française in 1985 after graduating from the National Conservatory of Dramatic Art, she was named as the 477th sociétaire in 1988 and has performed numerous roles including under the direction of Antoine Vitez (*La Celestina* by Rojas, 1989) Claude Régy (*No Exit* by Sartre, 1990), Jacques Lassalle (*The False Servant* by Marivaux, 1991; *George Dandin* by Molière, 1992; *Platonov* by Chekhov, 2003), Matthias Langhoff (*The Dance of Death* by Strindberg, 1996; *Lenz, Leonce and Lena* by Büchner, 2002), Alain Françon (*The Cherry Orchard* by Chekhov, 1998), Philippe Adrien (*The Maids* by Genet, 1997), Catherine Hiegel (*The Learned Ladies* by Molière and *The Return* by Pinter, 2000), and Claude Stratz (*The Imaginary Invalid* by Molière, 2001; *Caps and Bells* by Pirandello, 2005). In 2007–08 at the Comédie-Française and on tour, she acted in *The Imaginary Invalid* by Molière, directed by Claude Stratz, and *The Fables of La Fontaine* by Robert Wilson.

She has directed productions including *Oh, But Where Is the Head of Victor Hugo?* (1990, Théâtre National de l'Odéon), *The Childish Lovers* by Crommelynck (1993), *Pig in a Poke* by Feydeau (1998) and *The Rain Dancers* by Karin Mainwaring (2001, Théâtre du Vieux-Colombier), *Clitandre* by Corneille (1996, Salle Richelieu), *The Winter's Tale* by Shakespeare (2004, Studio-Théâtre), and *Dramuscules* by Thomas Bernhard (2005). For the Salle Richelieu, she directed *Return to the Desert* by Bernard-Marie Koltès (2007), and *Homage to Molière* (2008). In 2009 she directed *The Dispute* by Marivaux for the Théâtre du Vieux-Colombier and *Comic Mysteries* and *Fabulations* by Dario Fo (Salle Richelieu, 2010).

In addition to the Comédie-Française, she performed in André Engel's staging of *The Misanthrope; The Inspector General* by Gogol, *Quartett* by Heiner Müller, and *Dona Rosita* by Garcia Lorca, all directed by Matthias Langhoff, as well as in *Mr. Pantalone's Lesson* with Mario Gonzalez, directed by Christophe Patty (on tour in 2006), among others. She is an Officer in the Order of Arts and Letters and a Chevalier in the Order of Merit.